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Message Text

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 SS-07 AID-01 NSC-06 /024 W
---------- 012032
R 121130Z MAR 75
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3561
INFO AMCONSUL BIEN HOA
AMCONSUL CAN THO
AMCONSUL DANANG
AMCONSUL NHA TRANG
CINCPAC
USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 2764

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OREP, PINT, VS
SUBJECT: CODEL CONTACTS WITH OPPOSITION

1. DURING THEIR STAY IN VIETNAM THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION SAW AND MET WITH A LARGE NUMBER OF THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION TO INCLUDE THE MORE EXTREME RADICAL CRITICS OF THE GOV'T. IT MAY BE USEFUL TO POINT OUT THAT THE FACT THAT THESE OPPONENTS WERE FREELY SEEN BY THE VISITING DELEGATION, AT VARIOUS PLACES ALL OVER SAIGON, IS PROOF POSITIVE THAT THEY ARE AT LIBERTY AND NOT IN JAIL. FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE OPPOSITIONISTS THE CONGRESSIONAL VISIT OFFERED TO MANY OF THEM AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO PUBLICIZE THEIR VIEWS, CAUSES AND PERSONALITIES.

2. FOLLOWING IS DELEGATION'S ACTUAL AGENDA OF MEETINGS WITH OPPOSITION FIGURES, WITH CHARACTERIZATIONS OF PROCEEDINGS WHEN KNOWN. IN SOME CASES, NO INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE; IN OTHERS, WE HAVE ONLY NEWSPAPER DESCRIPTIONS.

3. FEB 27, 0900, ABZUG, FENWICK, AND FRASER MET PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT CALLING FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PARIS ACCORDS AT MOVEMENT'S HEADQUARTERS. PRESENT WERE LONG-TIME PEACE ACTIVIST LAWYER TRAN NGOC LIENG; PROF CHAU TAM LUAN, AMERICAN-EDUCATED CATHOLIC
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CRITIC OF GVN AND US POLICY IN VIETNAM; ACTIVIST PRIESTS FR

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CAN TIN (WHO CLAIMS 202,000 POLITICAL PRISONERS IN VIETNAM), FR NGUYEN NGOC LAN (LONG-TIME CATHOLIC LEFTIST) AND FR PHAN KHAC TU (WHO WORKS AMONG SAIGON'S LABORING CLASS AND IS ACTIVE IN PACM).

4. FEB 27, 0900, MCCLOSKEY AND BARTLETT MET PACM LEADER FR THAN HUU THANH AT REDEPTORIST CHURCH COMPOUND, 38 KY DONG ST, SAIGON. ALSO PRESENT WERE PACM MEMBERS DEP DUONG MINH KINH (WHO INTERPRETED), DEP NGUYEN VAN BINH, SEN LE CHAU LOC, EX-SEN NGUYEN VAN CHUC, DR (MD) NGUYEN THI THANH, AND ONE FR PHU FROM CAM RANH. VIETNAMESE AND FOREIGN PRESS WERE THERE. FR THANH THANKED CONGRESSMEN FOR PAST US AID, GAVE ALLEGED EXAMPLES OF OFFICIAL CORRUPTION, AND SAID FUTURE US AID MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE SIPHONED OFF ILLEGALLY. THANH SAID THERE SHOULD BE LEADERSHIP CHANGE IN ORDER TO MAKE PROPER USE OF AID.

5. FEB 27, 1000, MCCLOSKEY AND BARTLETT MET WITH NEWSPAPER OFFICIALS SEN TON THAT DINH (PRES OF PUBLISHERS' ASSOC), FR THANH LANG (PRES OF VN CHAPTER OF PEN CLUB), DEP VO LONG TRIEU (PUBLISHER OF DAI DAN TOC), HUYNH THANH VI (EDITOR OF DONG NAI, WHICH STOPPED PUBLISHING SOME YEARS AGO), NGUYEN KIEN GIANG (PRES OF JOURNALISTS' ASSOC), AND HONG SON DONG (PRES OF SUSPENDED DAILY DIEN TIN). THESE WERE ALL PEOPLE WHOM MCCLOSKEY REQUESTED TO SEE. NEWS ACCOUNTS LATER CALLED GROUP THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF THE MOVEMENT TO STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. EACH MAN SPOKE SEPARATELY, SAYING GENERALLY THAT LACK OF PRESS FREEDOM IS SHOWN BY RECENT GOV'T CONFISCATIONS OVER PRINTING OF INDICTMENT #2 AND THAT RECENTLY ARRESTED NWSMEN ARE NOT COMMUNISTS. FR THANH LANG ACCUSED US EMB OF COOPERATING WITH GVN TO FABRICATE INCIDENTS OF ALLEGED COMMUNIST ACTIVITY TO CREATE ATMOSPHERE OF INSECURITY BOTH TO CREATE IMPRESSION SVN NEEDS MORE AID AND ALSO ALLOW GOV'T TO SUPPRESS OPPOSITION. OTHERS PRESENT SEEMED UNEASY AT FR LANG'S STATEMENT AND DID NOT ASSOCIATE THEMSELVES WITH IT.

6. FEB 27, 1100, ABZUG AND FENWICK MET DEP KIEU MONG THU, DEP PHAM XUAN HUY, SELF-STYLED "THRID FORCE" LEADER MME NGO BA THANH, AND FR CHAN TIN FOR 45 MINUTES, ACCORDING TO CHINH LUAN.
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7. FEB 27, 1300, MCCLOSKEY AND BARTLETT MET 19 RECENTLY ARRESTED NEWSMEN. NEWSMEN WHEN INTERVIEWED TOGETHER WITH GVN OFFICIALS SAID THEY WERE WELL TREATED. MOST SAID THEY NEEDED NO LAWYER. SEVERAL ADMITTED PRO-COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES. TWO OR THREE DECLINED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS, SAYING THEY WOULD TALK ONLY WITH GVN OFFICIALS. MCCLOSKEY SUBSEQUENTLY TOLD PRESS HERE HE THEN SPOKE ALONE WITH ONE PRISONER, A MISS TRAN THI

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PHUNG THAO, WHO SAID SHE WAS BEATEN.

8. FEB 27, 1830, MCCLOSKEY MET DEP LY QUY CHUNG. SAIGON POST SAID MCCLOSKEY ASKED CHUNG FOR INFO ABOUT FATE OF STUDENT NGUYEN HUU THAI, "FORMER STUDENT LEADER APPREHENDED BY GOV'T IN 1972 AND RELEASED EIGHT MONTHS AGO. THAI WAS INVITED BY STANFORD UNIV TO BE VISITING PROFESSOR BUT NO INFOR ABOUT HIM IS AVAILABLE."

9. FEB 27, 2030, FRASER HAD DINNER AND MEETINGS WITH DEP LY QUY CHUNG, DEP HO NGOC NHUAN, DEP KIEU MONG THU AND FR CHAN TIN.

10. FEB 27, 2130, ABZUG, FENWICK AND FRASER WENT TO RESIDENCE OF MME NGO BA THANH WHERE THEY MET WITH HER AND OTHER WOMEN.

11. FEB 28, 0700, FRASER BREAKFASTED WITH UNKNOWN PRIVATE AMERICANS AND VIETNAMESE RESIDENTS IN SAIGON. MEETING ARRANGED BY INDOCHINA RESOURCES CENTER REP GENE STOLTZFUS.

12. FEB 28, 0800, FENWICK AND FRASER RECEIVED FR CHAN TIN AT THEIR QUARTERS.

13. FEB 28, 0930, ABZUG, FENWICK AND FRASER TOOK MME NGO BA THANH, ALLEGEDLY UNDER HOUSE ARREST, TO ICCS. FR CHAN TIN ACCOMPANIED. MME THANH PRESENTED A PETITION TO THE ICCS HUNGARIAN DELEGATION ON BEHALF OF THE POSITION OF THE "THIRD FORCE", WHICH SHE CLAIMS TO REPRESENT.

14. FEB 28, 1100, ABZUG, FENWICK AND FRASER MET FR CHAN TIN, MME NGO BA THANH, DEP HO NGOC NHUAN, DEP KIEU MONG THU AND DEP PHAN XUAN HUY AT 3 TRAN QUI CAP, SAIGON.

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15. FEB 28, 1130, FRASER MET SEPARATELY WITH NGUYEN KIEN GIANG AND LY BINH HIEP, CHAIRMAN OF VN JOURNALISTS MUTUAL ASSISTANCE ASSOC(BOTH RECOMMENDED TO FRASER BY GENE STOLZFUS), GIANG SAID CLOSING OF FIVE PAPERS LEAVES NO ONE TO EXPRESS OPPOSITION VIEWS: DAI DAN TOC, HE CHARGED, IS OPERATED BY LH DEPUTY BOUGHT OFF BY GOV'T, AND CHINH LUAN IS MANIPULATED BY US EMB. NONE OF 18 RECENTLY ARRESTED NEWSMEN, SAID GIANG, IS COMMUNIST OR SYMPATHIZER, HIEP, ON OTHER HAND, TOLD FRASER OPPOSITION VIEWPOINT IS STILL BEING REFLECTED IN PRESS, THOUGH HE FELT RVN WOULD BENEFIT BY PRESENCE OF EVEN MORE OPPOSITION PAPERS. HE SAID AT LEAST SEVERAL OF 18 NEWSMEN ARE PROBABLY COMMUNISTS OR SYMPATHIZERS. (WE UNDERSTAND GIANG WAS NOT HAPPY AT THE PROSPECT OF SEPARATE INTERVIEWS FOR HIMSELF AND HIEP, AN ARRANGEMENT ON WHICH FRASER, HOWEVER, INSISTED.)

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 SS-07 AID-01 NSC-06 /024 W
---------- 012627
R 121130Z MAR 75
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3562
INFO AMCONSUL BIEN HOA
AMCONSUL CAN THO
AMCONSUL DANANG
AMCONSUL NHA TRANG
CINCPAC
USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 2764

16. FEB 28, 1210-1255, MCCLOSKEY WENT TO TAN HIEP PRISON AND MET PRISONER PHAM TRONG CAU. CAU TOLD MCCLOSKEY IN PRESENCE OF WARDEN THAT HE WAS ARRESTED BECAUSE HAS YOUNGER BROTHER IN VC AND THAT HE HAS BEEN DETAINED BY SECURITY COMMITTEE SINCE FEB 28, 1972.

17. FEB 28, 1500, FRASER AND ABZUG MET GEN DUONG VAN (BIG) MINH AT MINH'S HOME. ALSO PRESENT WERE DEP LY QUY CHUNG, DEP HO NGOC NHUAN, DEP KIEU MONG THU, AND LY CHANH TRUNG, SOUTHERN CATHOLIC AND BIG MINH ADVISOR.

18. FEB 28, 1600, ABZUG AND FRASER CALLED ON SEN VU VAN MAU AND NRF. PRESENT WERE DEP LE DINH DUYEN, DEP LY TUONG TRAN, SEN TRAN DUY DON, SEN TON AI LIENG, SEN BUI TUONG HUAN, SEN PHAM DINH AI, AN QUANG PHARMACIST TONG LICH CUONG, BUI NHUNG, AND TWO EMBOFFS, ONE OF WHOM INTERPRETED. MAU DELIVERED OPEN LETTER STRONGLY ATTACKING PRES THIEU. IT ASKED FOR (A) END OF AID TO THIEU, (B) END TO MILITARY AID TO BOTH SIDES, AND (C) CONVERSION OF MILITARY AID TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC AID. MAU ALSO HANDED OVER JAN 26 RESOLUTION BY 18 PROTEST MOVE-MENTS CALLING FOR THIEU'S RESIGNATION.

19. FEB 28, 1600, BARTLETT MET GEN DUONG VAN MINH AT MINH'S HOME. MINH SAID THERE COULD BE NO FREE ELECTION IF THIEU RUNS

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AND ACCUSED US EMB OF PAST INTERFERENCE IN GVN ELECTIONS.

20. FEB 28, 2130, ABZUG AND FRASER VISITED FR THANH. PRESENT, ACCORDING TO DAI DAN TOC, WERE OTHER PACM MEMBERS FR DINH BINH DINH, DEP NGUYEN VAN BINH, DEP DANG VAN TIEP, DEP DUONG MINH KINH, DEP NGUYEN TUAN ANH, DEP NGUYEN DUC CUNG, SEN LE CHAU LOC, AND DR NGUYEN THI THANH.

21. MAR 1, 1030, FLYNT MET SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE CHRMN PROF NGUYEN NGOC HUY AT LATTER'S HOME. HUY TOLD FLYNT US SHOULD CONTINUE ITS MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID TO VN. HE SAID SVN SOMETIMES GOES TOO FAR IN RESTRICTING OPPOSITION ACTIVITIES, THOUGH OPPOSITION SOMETIMES GOES TOO FAR AS WELL. HUY ALSO SAID RUSSIANS AND CHINESE MUST BE CONVINCED TO LOWER THEIR LEVEL OF MILITARY AID TO NVN.

22. MAR 1, 1130, FLYNT MET GEN DUONG VAN MINH AT LATTER'S HOME. MINH SAID THAT VIETNAMESE PEOPLE HAVE LOST CONFIDENCE IN THEIR LEADERSHIP.

23. MAR 1, 1200, FRASER LUNCHED WITH PROF NGUYEN NGOC HUY AND CHINH LUAN PUBLISHER DR DANG VAN SUNG. FRASER ASKED WHETHER THEY HAD FREQUENT CONTACT WITH EMB AND WHETHER THEY TRANS-MITTED THEIR VIEWS TO EMB. ANSWERS TO BOTH QUESTIONS WERE AFFIRMATIVE. BOTH CALLED IT UNFAIR THAT DISCUSSION IN US OF AID TO VIETNAM CENTERS AROUND PROBLEM OF WHETHER TO ASSIST THIEU OR NOT, NOTING THAT THERE ARE OTHER VIETNAMESE BESIDES PRESIDENT. SUNG SAID THIEU SHOULD INVITE OPPOSITON - EVEN FR THANH - INTO GOV'T. HUY SAID NOT NECESSARY TO GO THIS FAR, THAT OPPOSITION HAS ROLE EVEN IF OUT OF POWER, BUT THAT THIEU MUST AT LEAST LISTEN TO OPPOSITION.

24. MAR 1, 1230, FLYNT LUNCHED WITH GUESTS INCLUDING LH SPEAKER NGUYEN BA CAN; SECY GEN OF INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC MOVE-MENT FOR INTERNATIONAL & CULTURAL AFFAIRS PROF NGUYEN VAN CHAU; AND PROMINENT CATHOLIC LAYMAN DR NGUYEN VAN THO. ALL AGREED THAT SUPPLEMENTAL AID WAS VITALLY IMPORTANT TO VIETNAM.

25. MAR 1, 2000, FRASER DINED AT HOME OF DEP NGUYEN VAN BINH. ALSO PRESENT WERE FR THANH LANG, LAWYER NGUEYN VAN TAN, LAWYER

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DANG THI TAM (BOTH MEMBERS OF MILITANT LAWYERS), AND OTHERS.

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26. MAR 2, 1345, ABZUG, FENWICK AND FRASER VISITED STUDENT HUYNH TAN MAM AT BINH TUY PROVINCIAL CHIEU HOI CENTER. MAM SAID THAT WHILE SEVERELY BEATEN DURING EARLY DETENTION HE IS NOW BEING WELL TREATED BUT DID NOT KNOW WHY HE IS BEING HELD.

27. MAR 2, 1630, BARTLETT MET DR DANG VAN SUNG. SUNG SAID THIEU SHOULD COOPERATE BETTER WITH HIS NATIONALIST OPPOSITION, THAT US SHOULD USE INFLUENCE TO SUPPORT FREE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, AND THAT CORRUPTION - ALTHOUGH PROBLEM - IS NOT INSTITUTIONALIZED HERE AS IT IS IN THAILAND.

27. MAR 2, 1710-1740, MCCLOSKEY VISITED BIEN HOA PROVINCIAL PRISON AND SPOKE ALONE (VIA CONGEN INTERPRETER) TO PRISONER NGUYEN THI MAN. SHE REPORTEDLY SAID SHE WAS ARRESTED MAY 7, 1972, FOR OPPOSING GOV'T, HAS HAD NO LAWYER AND NO TRIAL, DOES NOT KNOW WHAT SHE IS CHARGED WITH, AND RECEIVES WEEKLY VISITS FROM PARENTS.

29. MAR 2, 1730, FENWICK, FLYNT, CHAPPELL, FRASER AND ABZUG WENT TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS, VO TANH ST, FOR BRIEFING ON 19 ARRESTED NEWSMEN. CODEL WAS TOLD THEY COULD SPEAK WITH JOURNALISTS BUT ONLY IN PRESENCE GVN OFFICIALS AND COULD ONLY ASK QUESTIONS ON IDENTITY, DATE OF BIRTH, AND CONDITION OF HEALTH. SOME MEMBERS OF GROUP REFUSED THESE CONDITIONS AND VISIT ENDED PREMATURELY.

30. MAR 2, 1730, BARTLETT MET PROF NGUYEN NGOC HUY. HUY SAID THIEU SHOULD STOP EXCLUDING NON-COMMUNIST OPPOSTION, THAT US SHOULD SUPPORT FREE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, AND THAT THIEU WOULD LOSE IN A FREE ELECTION.

31. MAR 2, 1900, BARTLETT MET AIR VICE MARSHALL NGUYEN CAO KY. KY SAID PARIS ACCORDS HAD NEVER WORKED AND CANNOT PROVIDE BASIS FOR SETTLEMENT OF THE WAR.

32. CONG STEVEN SYMMS, WHO FOLLOWED MAIN CODEL BY SEVERAL DAYS BUT CONSIDERED HIMSELF PART OF IT, ALSO SAW OPPOSITIONISTS. ON MAR 4 HE MET WITH MME NGO BA THANH, WHO SAID IN FREE TWO-MAN ELECTION VIETNAMESE PEOPLE WOULD ELECT COMMUNIST CANDIDATE OVER PRES THIEU (BECAUSE THIEU SO BAD, NOT BECAUSE CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMUNISTS POPULAR), AND FR THANH, WHO GAVE CLEAR, CONCISE PRESENTATION OF HIS WELL-KNOWN POSITION. ON MAR 6 SYMMS DINED WITH MODERATE OPPOSITIONISTS DR DANG VAN SUNG, PROF NGUYEN NGOC HUY, PROF NGUYEN VAN CHAU, AND FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER TRAN VAN DO. CONSENSUS OF SESSION WAS THAT IT IS UP TO VIETNAMESE TO FIGHT CORRUPTION AND OTHERWISE PUT HOUSE IN ORDER, AND UP TO US TO PROVIDE AID FOR THEM TO CONTINUE. LEHMANN

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